WOODCRAFT FOLK

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Standing Orders
for General Meetings and Elections
of
Woodcraft Folk

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STANDING ORDERS

SO.1 This document contains rules to be observed at the Annual General Meeting; and in connection with the Annual General Meeting. The rules apply equally to any Extraordinary General Meeting or Special General Meeting.

APPLYING THESE STANDING ORDERS:

SO.2 (i) There shall be a Standing Orders Committee, which shall apply these rules as necessary. Members of this committee may not be General Meeting delegates.
(ii) The Standing Orders Committee shall be composed of 6 members, 3 elected each Annual General Meeting for a period of two years. The General Secretary or representative of the General Secretary shall act as ex-officio secretary to the Committee. The Standing Orders Committee shall be elected in the same manner that General Council Members are elected.

PREPARING FOR GENERAL MEETING:

SO.3 The Annual General Meeting shall be convened in accordance with the Articles of Association.

SO.4 In preparation for the Annual General Meeting the Standing Orders Committee and General Secretary shall agree and publish a timetable of pre-conference deadlines. In all cases, this timetable shall conform to any legal requirements and any additional requirements set down in the Articles of Association. Where possible, the timetable shall meet the following additional requirements:
(i) The 'pre-conference timetable' shall be published at least 180 days before Annual Gathering.
(ii) The Convening Notice shall be sent to all members at least 105 days before Annual Gathering.
(iii) The deadline for the receipt of motions shall be at least 84 days before Annual Gathering.
(iv) The preliminary agenda shall be published at least 63 days before Annual Gathering.
(v) The deadline for the receipt of amendments to motions and nominations election to General Council shall be at least 35 days before Annual Gathering.
(vi) The final agenda shall be published at least 14 days before Annual Gathering.

SO.5 Motions, amendments, and nominations for election to General Council or the Standing Orders Committee, shall be submitted to the General Secretary in written format and delivered by hand; post; fax; or e-mail.

SO.6 In preparation for the Annual General Meeting, and in accordance with time-scales set down by the Articles of Association and in SO.4 (above) the Standing Orders Committee shall:
(i) Publish a Preliminary Agenda. This shall comprise all motions which have been received. Any which are regarded as unconstitutional shall be so marked and a brief reason included.
(ii) Make recommendations for compositing motions and amendments where appropriate
(iii) Ensure that every amendment is relevant to the motion it seeks to amend, and that no amendment is accepted which directly negates the motion it seeks to amend.
(iv) Recommend the order of the Agenda.
(v) Publish the procedure for the conduct of elections.
(vi) Publish a Final Agenda. This shall comprise all the motions and amendments; together with nominations for election to the General Council and Standing Orders Committee. No business other than that set out in the Final Agenda shall be considered at the Annual General Meeting except as defined in SO.15 below.

SO.7 Motions to General Meeting:
(i) Motions to General Meeting should commence with "This Annual General Meeting...". The motions may be kept short or include argumentation, and should include actions to be taken.
(ii) Motions to alter the Standing Orders will be accepted every third year. Motions to alter the Articles of Association and the Aims, Principles and Programme will be accepted every year.

SO.8 Annual Policy Meeting:

An Annual Policy Meeting shall be held in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting

(i) The Annual Policy Meeting shall not be a General Meeting for the purposes of the Companies Act

(ii) The Annual Policy Meeting shall observe the Standing Orders for an Annual General Meeting except as follows:

Motions and Amendments to the Annual Policy Meeting may be proposed by General Council, District Associations, Groups, District Fellows Althing, Venturer Committee, District Fellows Committee, Regional Conferences, Annual General Meetings and Annual Policy Meetings.

BEFORE GENERAL MEETING BEGINS:

SO.9 The Standing Orders Committee shall:

(i) Ensure that there are sufficient delegates present to form a quorum:

(a) For the Annual General Meeting to begin, one hundred delegates, or representatives of one fifth of the total number of registered groups is required, whichever is lower.

(b) For further sessions of the Annual General Meeting, a majority of the delegates attending the General Meeting is required

(ii) Make a report to the Annual General Meeting formally presenting the Final Agenda and the procedure for the conduct of elections.

CONDUCT OF GENERAL MEETING:

SO.10 Chair of the General Meeting:

(i) The Chair of the General Meeting shall be appointed by the General Council

(ii) Any delegate speaking shall first address the Chair; announcing their name and the group or district which they represent.

SO.11 Authority of the Chair:

(i) If it is necessary for the Chair to intervene in the proceedings at any time, the General Meeting shall be immediately silent to hear the Chair without interruption.

(ii) The authority of the Chair (in consultation with the Standing Orders Committee) on any question under Standing Orders, or on Points of Order, shall be final; unless a challenge is made by at least four delegates and supported by two-thirds of the votes held in the General Meeting.

SO.12 Motions and Amendments:

(i) The motion on any particular subject is referred to as the *'original'* motion. A further motion which seeks to change part of a motion is known as an *'amendment'.* If an amendment is successful, the resulting changed motion is known as the *'substantive'* motion.

(ii) A motion or amendment must be proposed and seconded.

(iii) Before beginning the proposal speech the mover of the original motion may indicate a willingness to accept one or more amendments. If the majority of the General Meeting agrees, the motion shall be amended without debate.

(iv) Any remaining amendments shall be debated in turn after the original motion has been proposed and seconded. When an amendment has been proposed, no further amendment may be discussed until the current amendment has been dealt with.

(v) If an amendment is carried, the original motion is amended accordingly, and any further amendments proposed apply to the new substantive motion.

(vi) After all proposed amendments have been dealt with, the resulting substantive motion is open to debate and becomes the resolution of the meeting if it is carried.

SO.13 Compositing or Rewording Motions or Amendments:

(i) Where the various proposers and seconders agree, motions or amendments may be combined if their subject matter or purposes are similar. This is known as *'compositing'*.

(ii) Compositing after the Final Agenda has been published requires the agreement of the General Meeting.
(iii) Agreed wording of composited motions or amendments should be handed in writing to the Standing Orders Committee, which shall report the proposed composite and ask for approval of General Meeting.
(iv) If the wording of a proposed motion or amendment proves ambiguous in debate, the Standing Orders Committee may propose alternative wording to allow consensus to be reached. Any such suggestion shall be reported to General Meeting to seek approval.

SO.14 Withdrawal of a Motion or Amendment:

(i) Withdrawal of a motion or amendment after the Final Agenda has been published requires the agreement of the General Meeting.
(ii) If the proposer wishes to withdraw a motion or amendment before it is put to the General Meeting, they should notify the Standing Orders Committee immediately, which shall report the proposed withdrawal and ask for approval of General Meeting.
(iii) Any delegate may move that a motion be *'not put'* so long as it has not yet been proposed and seconded. There shall be one speech for, and one speech against such a motion, followed immediately by a vote.
(iv) Once a motion or amendment has been properly proposed and seconded it shall not be withdrawn.

SO.15 Emergency Motions:

(i) Emergency motions shall be debated only in exceptional circumstances and must be submitted in writing to the General Secretary or Standing Orders Committee. They must relate to urgent issues:
- (a) which have arisen since the closing date for motions
- (b) which cannot be dealt with in any other way
- (c) which are of such gravity as to justify rearrangement of business

(ii) The Standing Orders Committee shall consider the nature of any emergency motion proposed against the criteria outlined in SO.15(i) above, and report to General Meeting.
(iii) If the nature of the proposed emergency motion meets the criteria outlined in SO.15(i), the motion shall be placed on the agenda
(iv) It shall not be possible to amend emergency motions.

SO.16 Speeches:

(i) Anybody who speaks in a debate shall either speak about the matter in hand, or raise a point of order.
(ii) Nobody shall propose more than one amendment to any one motion.
(iii) Nobody shall speak more than once on any motion except as follows:
- (a) The proposer of a motion has the right of reply in accordance with SO.18 below
- (b) Somebody may raise a point of order, or make a request for information, in accordance with SO.17 below, despite having already spoken in the debate.
- (c) Anybody may speak once on a substantive motion or amendment despite having already spoken on a previous amendment.
- (d) A speaker may answer specific questions about their speech which have been properly raised by a *Request for Information* as per SO.17(iii)below.

(iv) Somebody may formally second a motion or amendment but reserve their right to speak until later in the debate.
(v) The maximum time allowed for speeches, taking account of any interruptions, shall be:
- (a) Proposer of an original motion - five minutes.
- (b) All other speakers (including the proposer of an amendment, and the proposer's right to reply) - three minutes.

(vi) The Chair, in consultation with the Standing Orders Committee, may curtail speeches.

SO.17 Points of Order and Requests for Information:

(i) Anybody wishing to raise points of order or make a request for information shall first obtain permission from the Chair at an appropriate point in the debate.

(ii) Anybody raising a *Point of Order* should quote the Standing Order or the section of the Articles of Association under which their point is being raised. All other business shall cease until the point of order is dealt with.
(iii) Anybody may make a *Request for Information* during a debate, even if they have already spoken on the matter in hand. Nobody shall use this procedure to give information.

SO.18 Right of Reply:
(i) The *Right of Reply* entitles the proposer of an original motion to reply to points raised in the debate, or to provide specific information which has been requested, but no new argument shall be raised.
(ii) After a speaker has begun their right to reply speech, nobody else shall speak on the matter.

SO.19 Reports:
(i) A report presented to General Meeting shall be assumed to be on a motion that General Meeting accepts the report, and SO.10 – SO.18 above shall apply, except that fifteen minutes shall be allowed for presentation of a report and there shall be no time limit for presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts.
(ii) Where it is proposed that General Meeting adopts a report, a speaker may propose that the report, or certain defined paragraphs of it, be referred back, or specific alterations be made. Such a proposal may be debated as if it was an amendment to a motion, and SO.10 – SO.18 above shall apply.
(iii) Following a resolution that a report be referred back, there shall be no further discussion or vote, and General Meeting shall move to next business. Resolution to refer back certain paragraphs of a report shall have the effect of excluding those paragraphs.
(iv) In the case of a report of the Standing Orders Committee, amendments may be proposed from the floor of the General Meeting. Any amendment or referral-back of a Standing Orders Committee report requires approval of a two-thirds majority of the votes held.

SO.20 Voting:
(i) All decisions shall be made by a simple majority of votes cast except where the Articles of Association or Standing Orders specifically require otherwise.
(ii) Motions to alter the Articles of Association; Aims, Principles and Programme; and Standing Orders; require the approval of two-thirds of the votes held at the General Meeting. Amendments to these motions only require a simple majority of votes cast.
(iii) Voting shall be on a show of voting cards. In exceptional circumstances it may be followed by a secret ballot at the discretion of the Chair, or if requested by at least fifty voting delegates.
(iv) If part of a proposed motion or amendment proves contentious in debate, the Standing Orders Committee may propose it be divided into parts and voted upon separately. Any such suggestion shall be reported to General Meeting to seek approval.

SO.21 Adjourning the Debate:
(i) Any delegate who has not already spoken during the debate may move that the matter *'lie on the table'* or be *'remitted to General Council'*. There shall be one speech for, and one speech against such a motion, followed immediately by a vote.
(ii) If a motion that the matter *'lie on the table'* is carried, it will be placed on the agenda of the following year's Annual General Meeting without a decision being made at the current General Meeting.
(iii) If a motion that the matter be *'remitted to General Council'* is carried, it will be placed on the agenda of the next General Council meeting, without a decision being made at the current General Meeting.
(iv) The Chair may adjourn discussion of any motion until a later session of the General Meeting to allow a specific question to be answered, if the required information is not immediately available.

SO.22 Closing the Debate:

(i) Any delegate who has not already spoken during the debate may move '*the closure'* or *'next business'.* There shall be one speech for, and one speech against such a motion, followed immediately by a vote.

(ii) If a motion for *'the closure'* is carried, the General Meeting shall move immediately to the right of reply, followed by a vote.

(iii) If a motion for *'next business'* is carried, the General Meeting shall move immediately to the next item on the agenda with no further speeches or votes on the matter.

SO.23 Rescinding a Resolution:

No resolution shall be rescinded or amended at the same meeting at which it has been passed.

SO.24 Suspension of Standing Orders:

(i) In the event of urgent necessity, the Chair may accept a motion to suspend one or more of these Standing Orders for a specific period of time.

(ii) Any delegate may make such a proposal, stating concisely which Standing Order(s) are to be suspended, for what purpose, and for how long. If formally seconded there shall be one speech for, and one speech against such a motion, followed immediately by a vote . A two-thirds majority of votes held shall be required.

SO.25 Visitors to General Meeting:

(i) Where accommodation permits, members of the Woodcraft Folk may attend the General Meeting, as visitors, provided that the full delegation to which their Group or District Association is entitled, has been taken up. Visitors who are members of the Woodcraft Folk may address the General Meeting with the same rights as delegates; but may not cast a vote.

(ii) Visitors who are not members of the Woodcraft Folk may be given permission to attend by General Council and may speak with the permission of the Chair or of the General Meeting.

SO.26 Elections to General Council

(i) Elections shall be conducted by Single Transferable Vote (STV) as defined by the Electoral Reform Society

(ii) Any individual member of the organisation may stand for election to General Council in the lay category as described in SO.26 (v)(a). If any candidate under 16 is elected they shall not be eligible to sit as a General Council member and will instead be appointed as an observer to General Council. The General Council member's place that they vacate shall remain empty for 2 years unless one of the following applies:

(a) The under 16 observer resigns, in which case the standard procedure for replacing a General Council member as laid down in the Articles of Association shall apply

(b) The observer turns 16, at which point they take the General Council member's place that has remained empty since their election as an observer.

Not more than 5 under 16 observers may fill these places at any one time.

(iii) Where the number of nominations received in advance of the nominations deadline is less than or equal to the number of vacancies, nominations may be taken from the floor of General Meeting. In this situation, there shall be no limit to the number of nominations taken from the floor.

(iv) Nominations shall close before the ballot is opened.

(v) General Council members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (unless otherwise stated) in the following groups:

(a) 6 Members, 3 elected each year for a period of 2 years.

(b) 4 Members, 2 elected each year who are not a cis-man,

(c) 1 Member who is also a member of a Woodcraft Folk District Association or Lone Group in Wales.

(d) 1 Member who is also a member of a Woodcraft Folk District Association or Lone Group in Scotland.

(e) 2 Members aged 16-24 inclusive, 1 elected each year for a period of 2 years.

(f) 2 Members aged 16-24 inclusive who are not cis-man, 1 elected each year for a period of 2 years.
(g) 2 District Fellows elected from the floor of District Fellows Movement Althing
(h) 2 District Fellows from and appointed by the District Fellows Movement Committee

AFTER THE GENERAL MEETING:

SO.27 Items on the agenda, not reached during the General Meeting, shall be deemed as remitted to General Council.

SO.28 Where motions have been passed which alter the Articles of Association; Aims, Principles and Programme; or Standing Orders; suitably revised documents shall be published by the Standing Orders Committee within 7 months of the General Meeting.

PROVISIONS

SO.29 Interpretation and limitation

If any dispute arises in relation to the interpretation of these Standing Order or any other rules, the Standing Orders Committee may resolve it and all persons in dispute about the matter shall be bound by the decision of the Standing Orders Committee except in the case of manifest error.

If there is any inconsistency between these Rules and:

(a) regulations laid down by the General Council,
(b) policies laid down by the Annual Gathering,
(c) the Standing Orders of the Woodcraft Folk
(d) the Aims Principles and Programme of the Woodcraft Folk, or
(e) the Articles of the Woodcraft Folk,

the latter shall always take precedent over the former.

SO.30 Amending the Standing Orders

A General Meeting may amend the provisions of this document, provided that:

(f) no amendment may be made which limits of alters any powers or provisions relating to the General Council or Annual General Meeting of the Woodcraft Folk; and
(g) the procedure to amended the Standing Orders as outlined in the Standing Orders is followed.

APPENDIX: An *at-a-glance* guide to Annual General Meeting procedures for Woodcraft Folk

The Chair:

Keeps order and runs the debate in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Standing Orders Committee:

Organises the agenda for the General Meeting, and makes sure all the Standing Orders are properly applied. Members of Standing Orders Committee are always available to be consulted – and will help and advise you. Use e-mail before the General Meeting (soc@woodcraft.org.uk) – or look for their table close to the stage in the General Meeting hall.

Motions (see also SO.12-14 & SO16)**:**

Motions are proposed and seconded by the people who brought them to General Meeting. They're then open for other people to make comment (which is called '*debate*'). When the debate is over the proposer has the right to have a final word, (which is called the *'right of reply'*) and then a vote is taken.

Anyone who is a member of Woodcraft Folk can make a comment in the debate on a motion. It's good to get up and go to the front of the hall near the microphone and wait in line so the Chair knows you want to speak.

There's a time limit on speeches about motions. The proposer of a motion is allowed to speak for 5 minutes, but everyone else is limited to 3 minutes. At the microphone there are three lights: when you start to speak the green light will be on, the yellow light comes on when there's a minute left, and when the red light comes on your time is up!

Apart from the proposers *'right to reply',* nobody is allowed to speak more than once about any one motion. However, if somebody makes a *'request for information'* about your speech you are allowed to answer them, and if you made a speech about an amendment, you can speak again about the main motion.

Amendments (see also SO.12-14)**:**

If there is an amendment to a motion, the amendment is proposed and seconded after the main motion has been proposed and seconded, but before any debate starts. After that, the amendment is debated so that General Meeting can vote on whether or not to accept the amendment *before* debate starts on the main motion.

The proposer of a motion may say before they begins the proposing speech that they are willing to accept an amendment (or amendments) which have been submitted. If this happens the Chair will ask immediately for a vote to see if the General Meeting agrees – and if it does, then the motion is amended immediately.

When people talk about an '*original'* motion, they mean the motion as it was first written. If General Meeting votes for an amendment, the amended motion which results is called the *'substantive'* motion.

Interruptions to Debate (see also SO17)**:**

If you think the rules of debate are not being followed properly then you can use:

'Point of Order' – at a convenient moment (eg: between speeches) go to the microphone, or stand up, and say 'Point of Order' clearly. If your point is so pressing that you need to make it in the middle of a speech – simply stand up and say 'Point of Order' loud and clear. Then wait. The Chair will normally give you permission to speak straight away, and you can tell the General Meeting what you think is wrong. Refer to the section of the Articles of Association or the Standing Orders which are appropriate. If you're not sure about this, go to the Standing Orders Committee immediately and ask them – once a vote has been taken it may be too late to do anything.

If you think more information is needed then you can make a:

'Request for Information' – at a convenient moment (eg: between speeches) go to the microphone, or stand up, and say 'Request of Information' clearly. When the Chair indicates to you, ask for the information you think is needed – it may be appropriate for the proposer to give this in the right to reply, or it may be that a Woodcraft Folk officer or member of General Council can provide the information which is needed to help General Meeting.

Getting a Motion Withdrawn (see also SO.14)**:**

If you want a motion to be removed from the agenda before the debate on it starts, you can propose that it be:

- *'not put'* – if this is carried – the motion is simply removed from the agenda.

The Chair will ask for a seconder, and then you will have the opportunity to speak and say why you think this should happen. There may be one speech against your proposal, and then there will be a vote.

Closing the Debate (see also SO.22)**:**

If you want the debate to end, and you haven't already spoken in the debate, you can propose:

- *'the closure'* – if this is carried - General Meeting moves immediately to the right of reply and a vote.
- *'next business'* – if this is carried - General Meeting abandons the debate and moves immediately to the next item on the agenda. No vote is taken, and the motion is never debated again.

The Chair will ask for a seconder, and then you will have the opportunity to speak and say why you think this should happen. There may be one speech against your proposal, and then there will be a vote.

Adjourning the Debate (see also SO.21)**:**

If you want the debate to be carried on somewhere else without this General Meeting voting on it, and you haven't already spoken in the debate, you can propose that the matter:

- *'lie on the table'* – if this is carried - the motion goes to the next Annual General Meeting
- *'be remitted to General Council'* – if this is carried - the motion goes to the next General Council meeting

The Chair will ask for a seconder, and then you will have the opportunity to speak and say why you think this should happen. There may be one speech against your proposal, and then there will be a vote.

Emergency Motions (see also SO.15)**:**

Emergency motions must relate to urgent issues which have arisen since the closing date for motions, which cannot be dealt with in any other way, and which are important enough to justify rearranging the General Meeting business. If you think you want to propose one, ask for advice from the Standing Orders Committee.

Suspension of Standing Orders (see also SO24)**:**

This means setting aside one or more of the rules which govern General Meeting procedure. It has the potential to disregard normal democratic processes, and should only be considered if there is a matter of urgency which cannot be resolved in any other way. If you think you need to do this, ask for advice from the Standing Orders Committee.

Status and Authority of this Appendix:

The Standing Orders (SO.1 – SO.30) set out above are the rules which govern how the Woodcraft Folk conducts its Annual General Meeting and some other meetings. This Appendix is part of the Standing Orders document and goes with the rules. It's designed to

explain and interpret the rules, and make them easier to understand, but it's not part of the rules themselves.

This means that if ever the Standing Orders themselves (SO.1 – SO.30), and this appendix, seem to contradict each other – then the Standing Orders must be seen as correct, and anything different suggested by this appendix is wrong.